Pakistan's efforts to push terrorists into J&K

581. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Pakistan has stepped up its efforts to push terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the army has foiled four major infiltration attempts from across the Line of Control in the first six days of November in which 11 militants, mostly Pakistani nationals have been killed; and

(c) if so, in the light of these, whether the decision to reduce ground armed forces in Jammu and Kashmir is justified?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) There has been an overall decrease in the infiltration attempts from across the border compared to last year. However, in the month of November, 2004 there was slight increase in the infiltration attempts compared to the months of September and October, 2004.

(b) During the first six days of November, 2004 four infitration attempts were failed by army in which 12 militants were killed.

(c) After due deliberation on the security situation, the number of Army personnel in the State of Jammu and Kashmir are being reduced with effect from 17th November, 2004.

Shortage of higher ranking officers in the Army

†582. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently there has been a shortage of higher ranking officers in the Indian Army and youths are not interested to join the army;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering any measures for raising the present facilities like pay and allowances etc. to motivate the youths; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE):

(a) There is no shortage of higher ranking officers in the Indian Army.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.